

unrepresented with us, although shared with other parts of the Old World. The sixty species of Weaver Birds described in the present volume, the thirty species of Larks, the sixteen species of Starlings, and the sixteen of Sunbirds form five ninths of the birds treated in the present volume. Of these only the Larks have any American representatives, the genus *Otocoris*, alone of this immense family of more than 120 species and subspecies, reaching America. The Ploceidæ are practically 10 primaried Finches, but uniformly differ from the latter in building covered nests, which are often exceedingly elaborate, retort-shaped affairs, or massed into compound structures containing "from twenty to more than three hundred separate habitations, which have no communication with one another beyond being under the same roof," as in the case of the Social Weaver Bird. The collective nest is added to each year, "until either the tree in which it is built gives way, or its branches can afford room for no more material; fresh nests are then built in neighboring trees by the younger birds, about twenty pairs joining together to work at each." Besides the Weaver Birds, many other South African birds either build covered nests or occupy holes in trees or rocks, yet very few of the species breeding in covered nests or in holes lay white eggs. In fact, some of the Weaver Birds, as the species of the large genus *Hyphantornis*, are remarkable for the variability of color of even eggs of the same pair of birds. In the Masked Weaver Bird (*H. velatus*) "they are of some shade of white, cream colour, pink, green, or blue; often unspotted, but more frequently marked, more or less thickly, with small spots and dots of various shades of red and brown; less often they are blotched and clouded heavily with large masses of the same colours." The nest is retort-shaped, but is without a neck.

Dr. Stark's 'Birds of South Africa' is a well arranged 'manual,' giving the characters of all the higher groups, with keys to the genera and species, full references to the literature, very full descriptions of the species, including variations of plumage with sex and age, the geographical range, and short life histories. The cuts, drawn especially for the work by Mr. H. Grönvold, mainly illustrate structural features, the head, or head, wing and foot, being usually figured for each genus; and several of the remarkable nests of Weaver Birds and Sunbirds are also illustrated. The book is beautifully printed, on heavy paper, and is in every way as attractive as the text is satisfactory and authoritative. —J. A. A.

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